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SB 1273 S.D.2

RELATING TO A FOREST STEWARDSHIP

Statement for House Committees on
Energy and Environmental Protection
Consumer Protection and Commerce

By

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SB 1273 S.D.2 would establish a program of grants to financially assist landowners in managing, protecting, and restoring important natural resources in Hawaii's forests.

Our statement on this bill does not represent an institutional position of the University of Hawaii.

We strongly concur with the intent of SB 1273 S.D.2 as set forth in the Findings and Purpose statement provided on pages 1 and 2. Certainly protection of watersheds, fish and wildlife habitats and isolated populations of rare and endangered species are all highly commendable goals.

We do have some questions regarding the implementation of the purposes of the bill. Page 5,6 lines 15-22, and 1-15, cite some 8 areas under which approved management activities and practices eligible for cost sharing are to be developed by the Board and cooperating natural resource management agencies. Each of these areas seems quite reasonable. However, on page 7, lines 7-15 a list of actions to be used by the Board in making cost-share payments includes the action of "Providing rural employment and economic diversification opportunities". This particular paragraph (3) seems inappropriate and out of place with the other paragraphs in this section and does not appear consistent with the management activities and practices eligible for cost sharing or the findings and purpose section of the bill.

We note (Pg. 7, lines 2,3) that landowners would be required to spend private funds before reimbursements are made. Would materials, goods, and services (Pg. 6 lines 21,22) be considered as expenditures of "private funds" to qualify for reimbursement?